When is the last time you updated your website? If it’s been over a year (yes, just ONE year!) it’s time to reassess how much business your website is generating in the form of qualified leads. Gone are the days when a website was simply an online brochure. Today, websites need to be multidimensional tools designed to engage visitors into wanting to learn more about you and your firm.

If you take a few minutes and read the home page content of a few law firm websites, you will realize a few things: they all deliver exceptional service, they all care deeply about their clients, and they are all aware of the need to be cost-effective. These messages are pervasive in the content of many law firm websites. So how do these messages differentiate the firms? Actually – they don’t. Following are some ideas for you to contemplate as you look at generating more leads from your web presence, and building a brand that is unique to your firm and its clients.

CONTENT IS KING

Recently an attorney expressed his frustration to me about not having high enough name recognition. I asked him a few questions:

- How often do you add new content to your website?
- Do you post at least two blogs per month on topics you want to be known for?
- Have you reviewed the keywords and phrases people use to find your website?
- Do you post and engage regularly on social media?
- Do you send regular (no more than quarterly) targeted communications to your contacts?

It turns out he wasn’t doing the things necessary to build his name recognition, like adding new and exciting content to his website.

I recently co-presented a session for Minnesota Lawyer and the Minnesota State Bar Association entitled, Modern Marketing Tactics for Lawyers in a “Like, Share, Follow” World. One of our panelists, Davis Senseman, founder of Davis Law Office said, “When we redid our website, I specifically looked for a website developer who would build us a website NOT like any of the other law firms.” If you visit www.DavisMeansBusiness.com, you will see lawyers, their children, and even their pets! The content on your website needs to overtly communicate the unique value you bring to your clients.

SSL Certificates and Why you Must Have One

You know you are on a secure website if you see https:// versus just http:// in the URL. Your doctor, bank, and financial advisor have likely had secure websites for many years. Why is it so critical now to purchase a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) Certificate? Because sometime later this year, Google will start penalizing non-secure sites with: “This is not a secure site. Do you want to proceed?” This is not a message you want people to see when they find you on Google. In addition, Google will not rank your site as highly if it is not a secure site. Talk to your website developer or host today about upgrading to a secure website.

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF SEO

SEO is a very complicated and often misunderstood art. SEO, more than anything on your website, is an intangible service you desperately need to be found online. Most SEO companies will conduct a free analysis of your website and will include current rankings of key words and phrases before you pay them a cent. Try this: Search Google for keywords phrases you would like to be found under.
Look at the results. If you have a friend at a firm that consistently captures top organic rankings (directly under the paid results), find out who they use for SEO. Interview at least two companies and ask them to share quantifiable results they have achieved for other services firms.

The science comes into play when you hire an SEO company to find high quality backlinks to other reputable websites that will increase the visibility of your website online. Backlinking provides “authority” on Google and results in your site ranking higher. Make sure your SEO consultant provides monthly analytic reports which will show you the ROI of your SEO efforts.

GET PERSONAL: ADD CLIENT FOCUS SECTION

Most law firm websites have services pages that generally include a summary of the service and possibly a few additional bullets of information let’s say on Business Transactions, Litigation, Estate Planning, Family Law, etc. I encourage you to look at your client base and create content just for them in a separate section of your website called “Who we Serve.” Clients want to see that you have worked with others just like them, and are attracted to pages that say, “For Veterinarians,” or “For Small Business Owners.” Then, create content that speaks directly to the client group. In addition to a tailored services summary, also include:

- What the client group appreciates most about working with the firm.
- Case studies and representative experience for the client group.
- Blog posts specific to their needs.
- Client feedback from others like them.
- FAQ’s or videos about related to the client group (why we focus on physicians…).
- A call to action to reach out and schedule a call or consult with you.

STICKY MENUS AND CONTACT FORMS

Today’s websites oftentimes have very long pages where visitors scroll and scroll to see the plethora of information on a given page. Ask your website developer to add a “sticky menu” to your website so that your primary navigation remains on the top of the visitor’s screen – even when the visitor is near the bottom of a page. Finally, make it easy for clients to contact you! Be sure that on every page “Contact Us” is easy to find.

Your website is the most important marketing tool you have. Make sure it is more than a web-based brochure. If you implement the ideas above, you can turn your website into a lead generation machine!

TERRIE S. WHEELER, MBA, IS THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES MARKETING LLC. PSM HAS WORKED WITH SCORES OF LAW FIRMS TO ENSURE THEIR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT – INCLUDING THEIR WEBSITES – IS DRIVING LEADS INTO THEIR FIRMS. YOU CAN REACH TERRIE AT (651) 295-5544, OR TERRIE@PSM-MARKETING.COM OR WWW.PSM-MARKETING.COM.